

VZCZCXRO3898
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHDO #0316/01 1340515
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 140515Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9053
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 000316

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: QATAR: REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR
IRAQ/VIABILITY OF NEW REGIONAL NETWORKS

REF: A. SECSTATE 48144
[1](#)B. DOHA 311
[1](#)C. DOHA 159
[1](#)D. DOHA 268

Classified By: CDA Michael A. Ratney for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(C) KEY POINTS

-- In response to Ref A, Embassy Doha assesses that Qatar will remain disinterested in most multilateral mechanisms for engaging on policy issues which include Iraq (e.g., the GCC plus 3).

-- Judging from its recent engagement with Iraq, however, Qatar could play a more constructive role in regional functional cooperation, and would serve as a natural leader in social/educational issues and as host of secretariats or conferences.

-- Qatar has an outsized view of its own importance and will almost certainly want a leading role in any new institutions/groups, in order to justify its participation.

-- Qatar could be expected to welcome a muted U.S. role in such regional cooperation. It is less sensitive to ties with Iran or Israel than many of its Arab neighbors, though the potential for cooperation depends on each issue and the political climate at the time of engagement.

End Key Points.

Areas for Functional Cooperation

[1](#)1. (C) Most of Qatar's multilateral discussions on functional issues take place within established organizations such as the 6-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and 22-member Arab League. Qatar's multilateral and functional participation outside of these institutions tends to be in the social and educational fields.

[1](#)2. (C) In particular, the Amir's Consort, Shaykha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misned, controls a host of well-funded organizations which are steadily expanding their regional reach and are natural platforms for functional cooperation by regional states. See Ref B for further background on Mozah's recent visit to Iraq and her intent to expand support for education there.

-- Post has previously highlighted the new "Silatech" youth employment initiative/organization founded by Shaykha Mozah with USD 100 million of seed money (Ref C). The organization is still in an embryonic stage but is launching pilot projects in six Arab countries, a list that could expand to include Iraq in the future.

-- Reach Out to Asia (ROTA), a development/humanitarian

assistance organization works in several regional areas, including Iraq.

-- Qatar is trying to position itself as a leading platform and promoter of Science and Technology, primarily through the newly inaugurated Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP), Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), and the GOQ's new practice of setting aside 2.8 percent of its GDP for research. These organizations are staffed in part by Iraqi and other Arab expatriates, and the Qatari leadership would surely welcome seeing these institutions become a regional hub or take on leadership within these fields.

13. (C) Qatar enjoys playing host to conferences and has built a formidable capacity for doing so, with major multilateral events taking place regularly throughout the temperate Oct-May timeframe each year. This past year, Qatar hosted the UN Financing for Development Conference, the Ozone/Montreal Protocol Conference, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Conference, and many others.

14. (C) Qatar has also sought or allowed itself to be used as a regional hub for secretariats. For example, the Gas Exporting Countries Forum will soon establish offices in Doha, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and UNESCO both have regional offices in Doha. Qatar has good air transport links to the rest of the region and an increasing commercial and hotel capacity. When Qatar supports a policy or functional idea, it opens its wallet to facilitate the necessary support structure. For example, its facilitation/mediation efforts in Lebanon and now Sudan/Darfur have provided a crucial meeting place and

DOHA 00000316 002 OF 002

funding source to allow negotiations to proceed in a positive climate.

U.S. Role

15. (C) Post assesses that Qatar would welcome a U.S. public and/or private role in regional functional cooperative efforts, as long as the U.S. role was not dominant (i.e., Qatar still wants to be the leader of its own projects and a major player within regional networks outside of its control). Such cooperation is already happening in some instances (e.g., ROTA has a partnership with Mercy Corps for educational projects in Iraq).

16. (C) What will usually not work with Qatar is approaching the leadership with a "tin cup", asking for money for an organization or process that has already been established without Qatar's input or participation.

-- As an example of efforts that would be welcomed by the GOQ, Post has recently advocated for forging a development/humanitarian assistance partnership with Qatar. Such a partnership builds on an expressed Qatari interest and a proven U.S. capability. Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs has proposed (Ref D) project-level development coordination with the USG and such an approach should be assumed as the preferred Qatari method for functional issues. That is, high-level engagement that discusses common areas of interest and paves the way for joint projects utilizing Qatari money and relationships. To that end, post believes high-level consultations with USAID would be fruitful.

Other Stakeholders/Members

17. (C) Qatar is less sensitive to ties with Iran and Israel than many of its Arab neighbors, but involving either state in functional cooperation would be dependent on a variety of factors, including the current political climate at the time of engagement and the specific issue under consideration.

-- Qatar's relationship with Iran is based on Doha's security fears and the fact that Qatar's current and future wealth depends on successful exploitation of the two countries' shared natural gas field (the largest in the world). This geo-strategic reality, coupled with Qatar's stated desire to maintain good relations with all parties, means that Doha may attempt to include Iran in its regional initiatives/conferences. Qatar suffered strong Arab blowback from its efforts to include Iran at the December 2007 GCC summit in Doha and at a February 2009 Gaza conference.

-- Qatar hosted for years an Israeli trade office (de facto embassy) until closing it in February 2009 during the regional turmoil over the conflict in Gaza. Qatari leaders still maintain lines of communication with Israel, though Qatar would probably follow the Arab consensus on whether or not to include Israel in any functional cooperative endeavors.

Ratney